

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

In the claims, please make the following amendments:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of making sausage, comprising:

combining a plurality of ingredients including, ~~but not limited to~~, a lean meat mixture, powdered vinegar, and an encapsulated food-grade acid to form a meat emulsion, said lean meat mixture comprising meat and animal fat wherein said fat content is between 5 and 45 percent;

extruding the meat emulsion from a tube into a tubular casing to create an encased sausage strand[[],];

linking the encased sausage strand into a linking mechanism to divide the strand into a plurality of sausage links thereby creating an elongated linked encased sausage strand[[],]; and

curing the elongated linked encased sausage strand to eradicate bacteria and impart color and flavor to the meat emulsion.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~the curing is done by naturally smoking the sausage strand~~ said fat content is 25%.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the food-grade acid is encapsulated citric acid.
4. (Currently Amended) A sausage product made from the process, comprising:

combining a plurality of ingredients including, ~~but not limited to~~, a lean meat mixture, powdered vinegar, and an encapsulated food-grade acid to form a meat emulsion, said lean meat mixture comprising meat and animal fat wherein said fat content is between 5 and 45 percent;

extruding the meat emulsion from a tube into a tubular casing to create an encased sausage strand[[,]];

linking the encased sausage strand into a linking mechanism to divide the strand into a plurality of sausage links thereby creating an elongated linked encased sausage strand[[,]]; and

curing the elongated linked encased sausage strand to eradicate bacteria and impart color and flavor to the meat emulsion.

5. (Currently Amended) The sausage product of claim 4 wherein ~~the curing is done by naturally smoking the sausage strand~~ said fat content is 25%.
6. (Original) The sausage product of claim 4 wherein the encapsulated food-grade acid is encapsulated citric acid.